

MAR 07 2025

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AND RECOMMEND FEDERAL, STATE, AND COUNTY PROGRAMS SUBSIDIZING THE TRANSPORT OF WATERBORNE CARGO.

1 WHEREAS, S.R. No. 125, S.D. 1, (2020) requested that the
2 Public Utilities Commission, in collaboration with the Division
3 of Consumer Advocacy of the Department of Commerce and Consumer
4 Affairs and any interisland water carriers operating in the
5 State, convene a Water Carrier Working Group to recommend
6 mid-term and long-term solutions that would balance the need for
7 continuous interisland water carrier services throughout the
8 State with the need for water carriers to maintain financial
9 sustainability; and

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11 WHEREAS, on December 27, 2021, the Water Carrier Working
12 Group issued its final report on its findings and
13 recommendations (report); and

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15 WHEREAS, the report noted that the State's communities are
16 largely dependent on the import of goods, finding that more than
17 eighty percent of goods consumed in the State are imported, with
18 ninety-eight percent of those goods being transported as
19 waterborne cargo; and

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21 WHEREAS, the report further noted that unlike other
22 communities in the continental United States that have
23 alternative means of transporting goods by freight and rail, the
24 geography of the State necessitates the employment of water
25 carriers to transport goods; and

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27 WHEREAS, the report additionally noted that the cost of
28 shipping goods to and within the State inflates the cost of
29 imported goods consumed in the State by as much as 7.5 percent;
30 and

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1 WHEREAS, the report additionally noted that the State's
2 dependence on imported goods necessitates maritime support to
3 ensure food security in the State; and
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5 WHEREAS, the report also noted that while agricultural
6 specific subsidies exist for aircraft that transport cargo to
7 remote destination, similar subsidies do not exist for general
8 cargo transport to and within the State; and
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10 WHEREAS, the report recommended that the funding required
11 to subsidize general cargo transport be sourced from existing or
12 newly created federal, state, and county government programs;
13 and
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15 WHEREAS, the report also recommended that the Legislature
16 pass a resolution requesting the Department of Transportation to
17 convene a working group to develop and recommend federal, state,
18 and county subsidies for the transport of waterborne cargo, and
19 to provide the Legislature with a status update of these
20 programs no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the
21 Regular Session of 2023; and
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23 WHEREAS, the report specifically recommended that the
24 Department of Transportation lead a committee to continue
25 working and consulting with the United States Department of
26 Transportation in the establishment of a federal waterborne
27 cargo subsidies program, including the drafting of legislative
28 language; and
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30 WHEREAS, the report further specifically recommended that
31 the Department of Transportation lead a committee to work and
32 consult with the Hawaii State Senate and House of
33 Representatives committees with jurisdiction over
34 transportation, county departments of transportation, and county
35 councils in the establishment of a local waterborne cargo
36 subsidies program, including the drafting of legislation; and
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39 WHEREAS, the report also specifically recommended that the
40 Department of Transportation lead a committee to work and
41 consult with the Hawaii congressional delegation to sponsor a
42 bill establishing a federal waterborne cargo subsidies program



1 within the United States Department of Transportation; now,
2 therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
5 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025, the
6 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
7 Transportation is requested to convene a working group to
8 develop and recommend federal, state, and county programs
9 subsidizing the transport of waterborne cargo; and

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
12 to comprise the following members:

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14 (1) The President of the Senate or the President's
15 designee;

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17 (2) The Speaker of the House of Representatives or the
18 Speaker's designee;

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20 (3) The mayor of each county or the respective mayor's
21 designee;

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23 (4) One member representing the Department of Business,
24 Economic Development, and Tourism;

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26 (5) One member representing the Department of
27 Transportation;

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29 (6) One member representing the Department of Agriculture;

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31 (7) The chairs of the respective senate and house
32 committees with jurisdiction over transportation; and

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34 (8) One member from each water carrier operating in the
35 State; and

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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
38 to submit a report providing a status update on the development
39 of these programs no later than twenty days prior to the
40 convening of the Regular Session of 2026; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of
2 Transportation is requested to lead a committee work and consult
3 with the respective senate and house committee with jurisdiction
4 over transportation, county departments of transportation, and
5 county councils in the establishment of a local waterborne cargo
6 subsidies program, including the drafting of legislation; and
7

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of
9 Transportation is requested to lead a committee to work and
10 consult with the Hawaii congressional delegation to sponsor a
11 bill to establish a federal waterborne cargo subsidies program
12 within the United States Department of Transportation; and
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
15 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
16 Board of Agriculture; Director of Business, Economic
17 Development, and Tourism; Director of Commerce and Consumer
18 Affairs; Director of Transportation; President of the Senate;
19 Speaker of the House of Representatives; Chairs of the
20 respective senate and house committees with jurisdiction over
21 transportation; and Mayor of each county.
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OFFERED BY: 

